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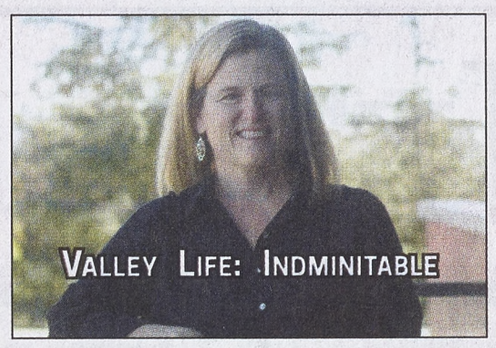
The Valley Star

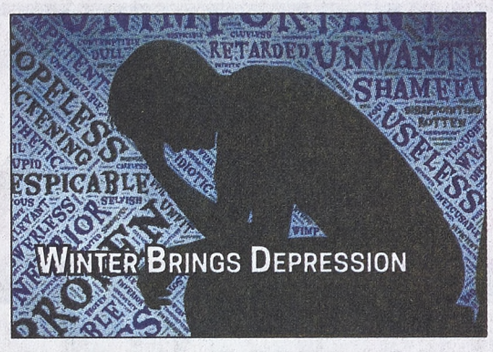
AN INDEPENDENT MEDIA OUTLET

VOLUME 85 , ISSUE 6

VALLEY STAR DECEMBER 7, 2017

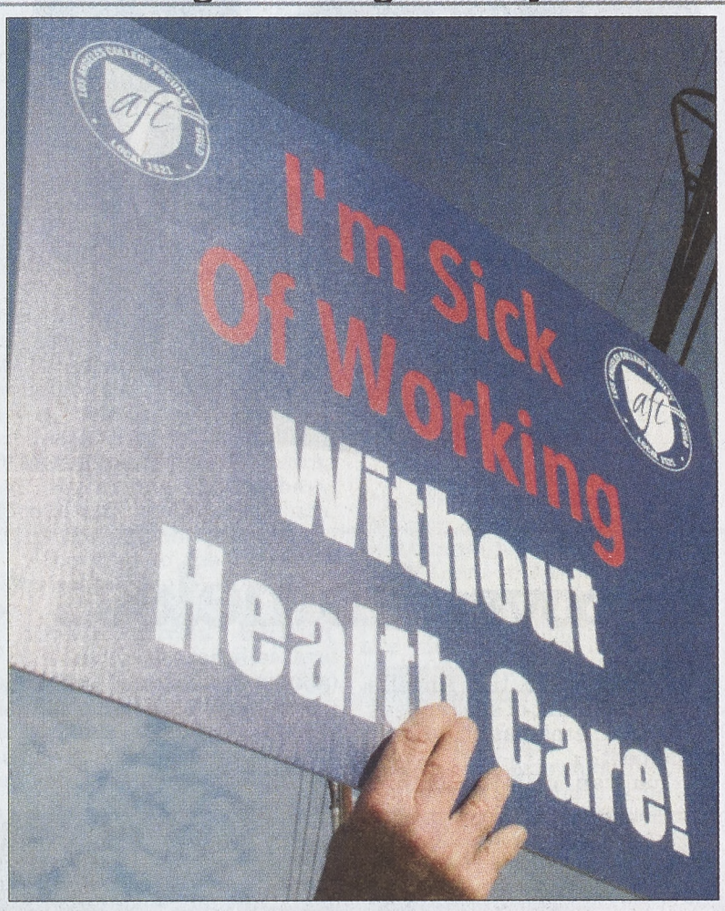
WWW.THEVALLEYSTAR.COM

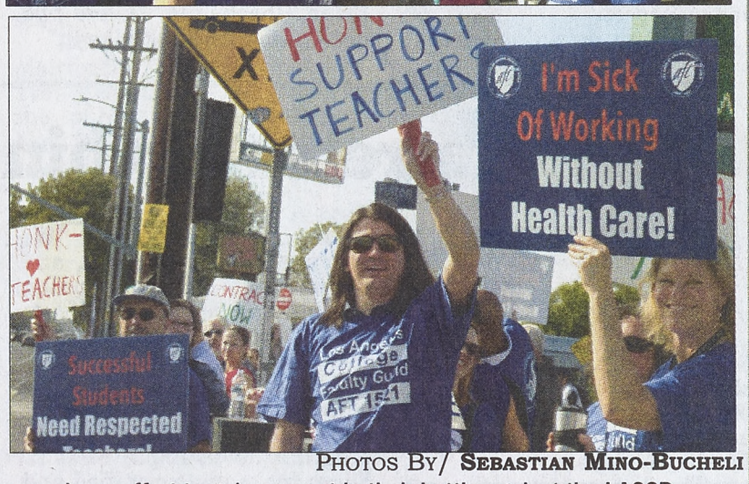




Faculty, district end 18-month battle

The Los Angeles College Faculty Guild and the LACCD came to an agreement after a protracted battle.





PHOTOS BY/ SEBASTIAN MINO-BUCHELI

PROTESTS- Valley faculty members wave signs in protest near the marquee, in an effort to gain support in their battle against the LACCD.

BY CESAR MARTINEZ AND LON DOMINGUEZ
STAFF WRITERS

After an 18-month standstill between the LACCD administrators and its faculty, a tentative agreement has been made to extend their contracts to the teachers' terms.

The year-long gridlock of negotiations between the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild and the LACCD Board of Trustees arose over job security, cost of living raises, and reimbursements for health benefits; in the meanwhile, academic staff proceeded working with an expired contract since June.

"The problem is significant because it is a considerable cost to the district," said Larry Nakamura, chapter president of the American Federation of Teachers, "but it is an important benefit that we have negotiated in the past and do not wish to lose."

Although contact with district negotiators were unavailable, a resolution between both parties resulted in a three year-deal which includes an across-the-board pay raise for all faculty. Additionally, separate negotiations focusing on the Health Reimbursement Accounts and district contributions to the adjunct faculty's medical coverage are close to completion.

"A raise in all faculty salaries at least two percent each year of the three-year contract" was eventually accepted by the district negotiators according to the local AFT website. "An additional raise on the adjunct salary schedule for years of service... will enable adjuncts to acquire district health insurance."

Following a walk-out demonstration held in front of Valley College the day before Thanksgiving, both full time and adjunct faculty flashed their signs and received supportive honks to address a year long-silence from the district. The delay lasted beyond lengththeir contracts after nearly a year.

The protest, which took place on Nov. 22, was the result of the frustration and "disrespect" that adjunct faculty had over the stalled talks with the district regarding issues over pay raises and health benefits. The aftermath of the faculty's demonstration made their voice heard by the district administrators.

"The board needs to demonstrate respect for its faculty," said Joanne Waddell, guild president of the AFT local 1521, "including teachers and counselors who come into daily contact with students to help them succeed."

Savannah Simmons also contributed to the story.

Smokey air closes down Valley

Valley College shutdown Tuesday due to a massive cloud of ash and smoke from the nearby Kegel Canyon Fire.

BY SOLOMON SMITH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

High winds blew huge clouds toward the campus and the surrounding area dropping dust and ash onto students and buildings, prompting President Erika Endrijonas to close the campus.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), along with several other health officials, issued a severe air quality warning. The warning, along with the visible dust and smell of smoke, sparked concern for Endrijonas. After monitoring the situation and talking to the chancellor of LACCD, Endrijonas made her decision.

"Based on that and the fact that Pinter Construction had sent all their workers home, and the air quality seemed to be deteriorating that was when I decided to close the campus," said Endijonas.

Closing the campus also meant cancelling some major events. The Valley Glen Neighborhood Association was scheduled to meet on Campus at 7.pm., with the president as a guest speaker. The closure also quashed the Winter Wonderland Banquet, a seasonal event celebrating the faculty and staff.

Getting the word out about the closure was quick due to the use of social media and the Blackboard Connect System. It sent emails and text messages to students, faculty, and staff letting them know that the campus was closed at around 12:15p.m.

Some students also found out through messengers who went room to room letting professors know about the campus shut-down.

"A lady just came in and had a big sign," said Heymie Vidaurre who was in her math class when she learned about the campus closing.

Vidaurre lives in the Sylmar area with her husband and is concerned about the close proximity of the fire to her home. She has also been affected by other recent fires in the area.

The Health Center gave away free surgical face masks to students who came by. Many students could be seen waiting for their rides or walking to parking lots or bus stops while wearing the odd surgical mask.

"I just saw some guy walking by [wearing one]," said Vidaurre, who was also wearing one herself.

Dealing with the blaze has been problematic for firefighters as the high winds have pushed it to burn across 4000 acres since it began early Tuesday morning.

According to reports from the L.A. Times and ABC7 News, the fire began around 4a.m. near Gold Creek but quickly spread. Currently the fire is not contained and over 700 firefighters from several different groups are battling the blaze.

Endrijonas is cautious but optimistic. She insists that today's closure should not affect finals or further disrupt the hectic end-of-the-year schedule, and that the school should reopen tomorrow.

"And hopefully tomorrow things will have calmed down, we're assuming we're open tomorrow, it's just for right now," said Endrijonas.

Maintenance uses unhealthy Roundup

Many school districts have banned Roundup but Valley College continues to use herbicide.

PHOTO BY CURTESY OF AIRMAN 1ST CLASS MATTHEW LOTZ

POISON- Dangerous herbicides on campus are a real concern for some.

BY JESSICA LANGE
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Although school districts such as Burbank, Irvine, and Glendale have banned the use of Roundup, Valley College continues to use it on the 104-acre campus.

Valley has been using Roundup since at least 1989 to control weeds in the landscape. The amount of Roundup used depends on the number of weeds, according to campus officials. Hundreds of districts have eliminated the use of this chemical because research says that it causes cancer. The chemical glyphosate has been added to Proposition 65, which requires businesses to provide warnings that ingredients are "known to the state of California to cause cancer and birth defects and other reproductive harm."

According to Jack Epling, the gardening supervisor at Valley, "Roundup is used on all the spaces that are not grass." For example, it is used on the shrub beds, planter area, and the bushes.

The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer announced the main ingredient in Roundup, glyphosate, is "probably carcinogenic to humans."

CNN reported that "more than 800 cancer patients are suing Monsanto, the maker of Roundup."

However, some people have argued that Roundup is not carcinogenic. Even though LA County has banned it, businesses continue to use it.

According to Tom Lopez, the director of Valley College facilities, "there are certain levels of pesticides and Roundup has the lowest level of toxicity. I think we're operating at a safe manner. I don't have any reservations, and I am confident in Jack's abilities."

However, like restaurants that are required to post the use of glyphosate, Valley College freshman Anahi Hernandez said, "the college should make it known to the students that Roundup is used on campus."

Final Examination Schedule — FALL 2017

Monday, December 11 to Sunday, December 17

- Except for classes of less-than-semester length, the LAST DAY OF REGULAR INSTRUCTION IS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10.
- Classes meeting less-than-semester length will have the **final exams at the last meeting of the class.**
- FINAL EXAMINATIONS MUST BE HELD ON THE DAY AND TIME SCHEDULED AND IN REGULARLY ASSIGNED CLASSROOMS.
- FRIDAY CLASSES will have their final during the regular class meeting on December 15.
- SATURDAY CLASSES will have their final during the regular class meeting on December 16.

To use the schedule below:

- Locate the day and hour of your class on the grid.
- Days of the week are abbreviated M T W Th F for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday.

DAY CLASSES

Day and Date Of Final Exam	MONDAY DEC 11			TUESDAY DEC 12		
Time of Exam	6:30am - 8:30am	9:30am - 11:30am	12:30pm - 2:30pm	6:30am - 8:30am	9:30am - 11:30am	12:30pm - 2:30pm
Normal Class Schedule	6:30 – 7:55 MW 6:45 – 7:55 MTWTh	9:40 – 10:50 MTWTh 9:40 – 11:05 MW 9:40 – 10:55 MWF 9:40 – 12:10 MW	1:00 – 2:10 MTWTh 1:00 – 2:25 MW 1:00 – 2:15 MWTh 1:00 – 3:30 MW	6:30 – 7:55 TTh	9:40 – 11:05 TTh 9:40 – 10:55 TThF 9:40 – 12:10 TTh	1:00 – 2:25 TTh 1:00 – 2:15 TThF 1:00 – 3:30 TTh

Day and Date Of Final Exam	WEDNESDAY DEC 13			THURSDAY DEC 14		
Time of Exam	8:00am - 10:00am	10:30am - 12:30pm	1:00pm - 3:00pm	8:00am - 10:00am	10:30am - 12:30pm	1:00pm - 3:00pm
Normal Class Schedule	8:15 – 9:25 MTWTh 8:00 – 9:25 MW 8:00 – 9:15 MWF 8:00 – 10:30 MW	11:20 – 12:30 MTWTh 11:20 – 12:45 MW 11:20 – 12:35 MWF 11:20 – 1:50 MW	2:20 – 3:30 MTWTh 2:40 – 4:05 MW	8:00 – 9:25 TTh 8:00 – 9:15 TThF 8:00 – 10:30 TTh	11:20 – 12:45 TTh 11:20 – 12:35 TThF 11:20 – 1:50 TTh	1:45 – 3:10 TTh 1:45 – 3:00 TThF

EVENING CLASSES

CLASSES MEETING AT 3 PM OR BEFORE 5 PM			CLASSES MEETING AT 5 PM OR BEFORE 6 PM			CLASSES MEETING AT OR AFTER 6 PM		
Class Meets	Exam Date	Time	Class Meets	Exam Date	Time	Class Meets	Exam Date	Time
M	M Dec 11	4 – 6pm	M	M Dec 11	4:30 – 6:30pm	M	M Dec 11	7 – 9pm
T	T Dec 12	4 – 6pm	T	T Dec 12	4:30 – 6:30pm	T	T Dec 12	7 – 9pm
W	W Dec 13	4 – 6pm	W	W Dec 13	4:30 – 6:30pm	W	W Dec 13	7 – 9pm
Th	Th Dec 14	4 – 6pm	Th	Th Dec 14	4:30 – 6:30pm	Th	Th Dec 14	7 – 9pm
MW	M Dec 11	4 – 6pm	MW	W Dec 13	4:30 – 6:30pm	MW	M Dec 11	7 – 9pm
TTh	T Dec 12	4 – 6pm	TTh	Th Dec 14	4:30 – 6:30pm	TTh	T Dec 12	7 – 9pm

In the event of a conflict, speak with your instructor to schedule an alternate time to take the final.

THE WINTER 2018 AND SPRING 2018 SEMESTERS ARE BOTH AVAILABLE FOR REGISTRATION. FOR SCHEDULES AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION CONTACT THE ADMISSIONS AND RECORDS OFFICE AT 818.947.2553 OR ONLINE AT LAVC.EDU/ADMISSIONS/INDEX.HTML

Some choose bikes over higher gas prices

With spikes in gas prices, students are using their bikes to get around.

BY RAY G. VEGA
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Due to a spike in gas prices of about 12 cents per gallon, more people are considering switching to bicycles in order to get to work or school and save some money in the process.

As if it were a defense mechanism, when gas prices spike people tend to look for ways to lessen the load on the wallet. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that as of 2012 bike commuting in Los Angeles increased from 0.6 to 1 percent since 2000.

Valley College Student Angel Eli Anguiano said driving to school cost him $7 a day to commute to school.

"I really can't afford it," Anguiano said. "I would rather bike or skate back home."

This can be seen more in areas where bike lanes and paths are accessible to students and workers whose distance from their destination is doable in a bike. As of spring 2011, United States gas prices were nearly $4 per gallon.

Valley College student Emilio Ramirez commutes to school three times a week, and he feels that biking to school has its benefits.

"I think biking to campus helps me save money," Ramirez said. "I am not taking my car, wasting gas or even riding the bus. And it also helps me to burn some extra calories."

In the San Fernando Valley, the Orange Line bike lane provides a secure way to pedal around the Valley. Whether you are coming from Van Nuys or North Hollywood, the bikeway offers an easy, hassle-free road to Valley College.

Moreover, those who want to avoid the infamous L.A. traffic can use these lanes to reach their work destinations or transfer to the North Hollywood Metro Red Line towards Downtown Los Angeles as they promote a bike culture.

It is safe to say that biking to campus, work, or another destination is greatly cheaper than driving, but more importantly, it can lead to a lasting impact in a community that will promote a better socio-economic aspect.

Not only we will be able to cut down on gas and healthcare expenses, but it will also serve as an incentive to develop the infrastructure and allow riders to feel safe during their daily commute through traffic.

By taking into consideration and comparing the expenses between a car and a bike, the cost of maintaining a car is around $9,000 annually, according to AAA. On the other hand, bike prices range between $150 for a used one and $700 or more for a new commuter bike and it only costs $308 per year to keep it in good condition.

"I don't have a car anymore," said Valley Student Brian Chachagua. "I live two miles away, so I just bike it."

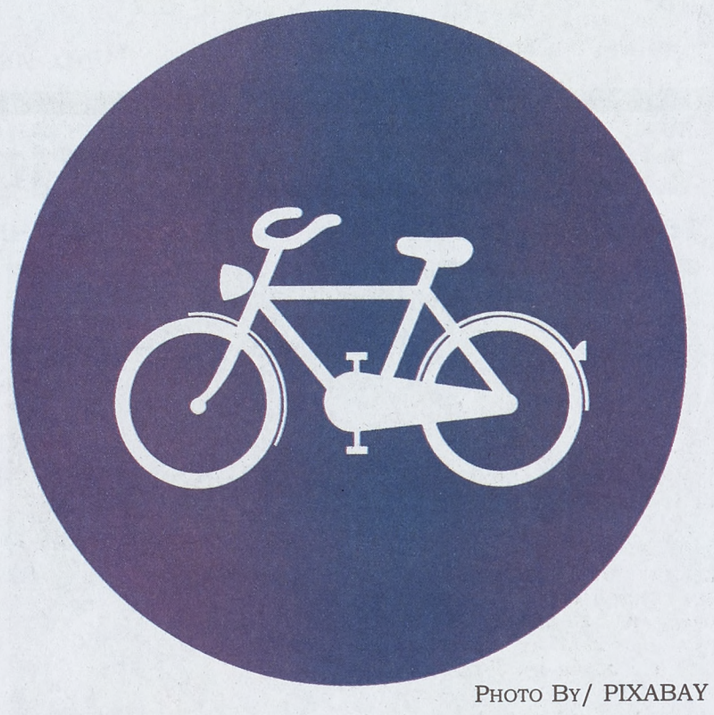


PHOTO BY/ PIXABAY

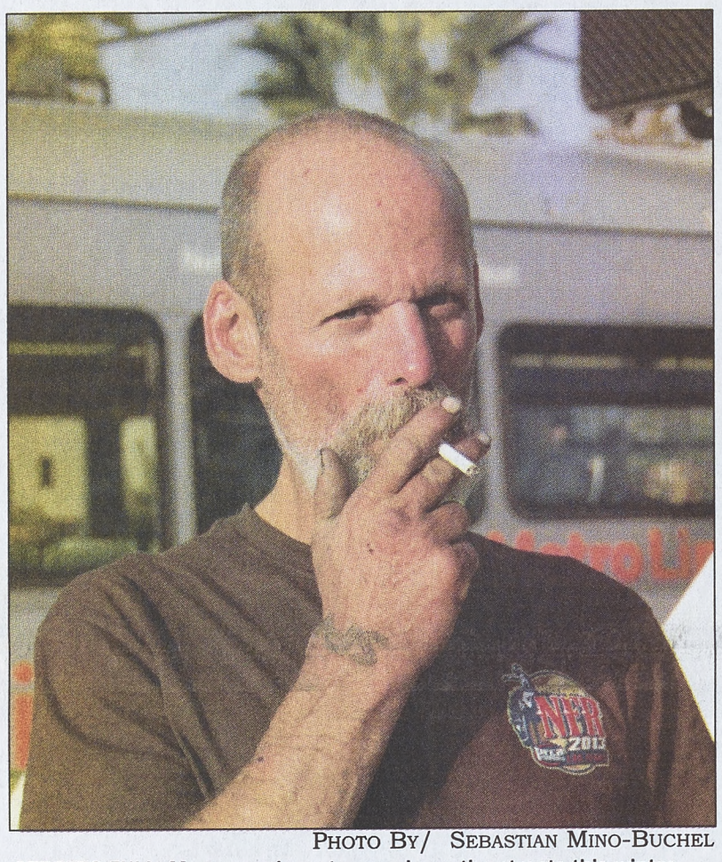


PHOTO BY/ SEBASTIAN MINO-BUCHEL

STREETS FULL- Many may have to remain on the streets this winter.

Shelters stretched thin to cover homeless

BY AKI TAKASHIRO
STAFF WRITER

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority released their list of winter shelters to offer warmth and food as well as support services just in time for the holidays.

The list comes with each shelter's address and phone number; not all shelters accept walk-ins and require a phone call in advance.

Free transportation to each location is provided. You can find individual pickup locations here: www.lahsa.org/winter-shelter.

These shelters have 1,201 beds in 12 locations and are available to single adults only. However, each shelter providers offer their own services to find rooms for youth, family and women.

"We are more than welcome to take anyone--from young people to women, especially in this cold weather," said Iyby Lopez, who works at the Salvation Army. "We just opened this Monday, and we can also help you finding permanent housing, and if you need we can help on addiction recuperation too."

Available services may vary because 10 different organizations support the winter-shelter program. For example, First To Serve Inc, a state certified and licensed substance abuse support facility, is offering shelters at two locations this year. One is located in South L.A. and the other in West L.A. In these locations, the services available are showers, snack packs, self-care supplies, access to case management and more.

The 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count says that the number of homeless people in L.A. has increased since last year by 26 percent, from 46,874 to 57,794. Only 26 percent stay in shelters.

There are 7,627 homeless citizens in the San Fernando Valley, which is four percent more than the amount of homeless citizens last year, and according to the Los Angeles Times, the count of shelter beds in the L.A. area has shrunk by 11 percent.

You can call the hotline (800) 548-6047 for additional information on finding a shelter.

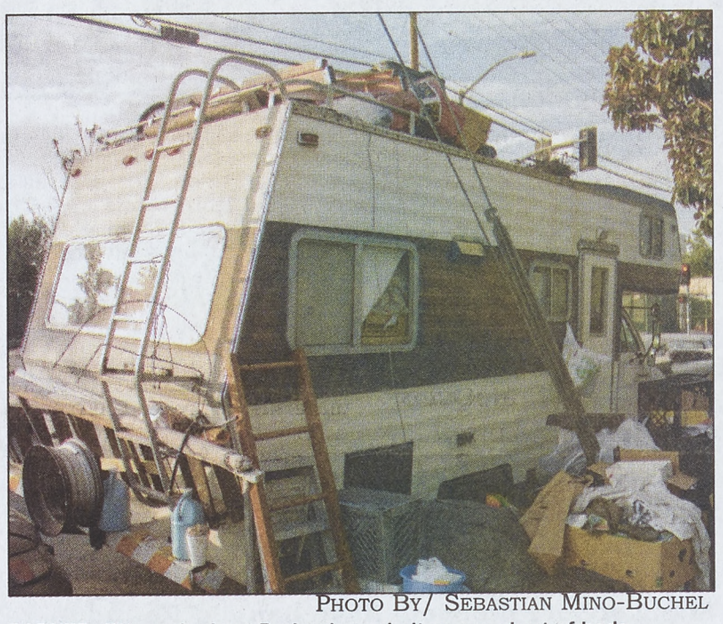


PHOTO BY/ SEBASTIAN MINO-BUCHEL

PARKED- RVs park along Burbank as shelters run short of beds.

PHOTO CURTESEY OF THE GSA

PRIDE- The GSA's insignia is the Monarch Lion decorated in the colors of the Pride Flag.

Valley's GSA pioneer for others

The GSA resource page is the first of its kind and the first step in aiding LGBTQ+ students

BY FREDY VEGA
STAFF WRITER

The Gay Straight Alliance of Valley College has set an example for others in the LACCD by getting their own resources page online, and their next step is to open a LGBTQ+ center.

Although becoming the first in the district to get a page on the college's website, President Moira McFadden along with Advisers Kimberly Roberson and Hasmik Arakelyan have set a larger goal of creating a full center on campus designated to LGBTQ+ affairs. The center would educate students on sexual education and provide special counseling to those in need.

"This is very near and dear to my heart. Anyone and everyone should be able to come and learn with the freedom and confidence to do so," said McFadden.

Their efforts as of late was a survey asking about the LGBTQ+ center and with the sole intention that the students at Valley will display just how much of a need the center is. Although, it seemed like a dream the survey has an 80% return rate so far, and the center may be in talks of approval as early as next summer.

Roberson and Arakelyan can be contacted by email to answer any questions you may have. You can find their email on the first tab of the resources page. The GSA meets every Monday from 12-1 p.m. in the SkyBox conference room and welcomes anyone to join.

"We are trying to create a giant family that is welcoming so anyone can come in feeling like they belong here," said McFadden.

The Valley Star is published by students of the journalism and photography classes as a learning experience, offered under the college journalism instructional program.

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VALLEY LIFE

Christmas tree prices rise, along with nationwide demand

A nationwide Christmas tree shortage is causing prices to skyrocket.

BY KATHLEEN ZAMORA AND AMY NUNGARAY
STAFF WRITERS

Millions of Americans will be on their way this week to pick out a holiday tree that smells of fresh pine to start off the Christmas season.

They will be in for a surprise when they realize that the nationwide sticker price has increased due to the recession that the country fell into a decade ago. Farmers are responding to the lack of demand from previous years, and natural catastrophes have affected soil conditions which stunts the planting process.

According to the National Christmas Tree Association, there will be a price increase of 5 to 10 percent. Because of this increase, families are switching to artificial christmas trees and the battle of real versus faux trees will begin. Eighty percent of families will use artificial trees nationwide says the National Christmas Tree Association.

"It really stinks that I can't afford to get a real Christmas tree anymore." said Valley Glen resident Sarah Hernandez. "It feels as if the Grinch is here and is taking away my Christmas spirit."

> ***"It feels as if the Grinch is here and is taking away my Christmas spirit,"***
>
> ***said Sarah Hernandez, a Valley Glen Resident***

Transportation to get the trees has become increasingly difficult, because the shipping containers that are used to move them are being utilized for hurricane relief across the nation. The demand for trucks and drivers have forced the companies to pay more, thus forcing another increase to the overall price.

While Oregon, the largest producer of Christmas trees for the Farmer's market, is facing a heat wave that has dried up the growth of grand firs trees. North Carolina, the second largest producer, is doing their best to meet the demand. It takes an average time of 7 to 12 years to grow a 6 foot Christmas tree.

"The wholesale cost of growing a Christmas tree is about 75% labor and 25% everything else combined," said Mark Rohlfs, Owner of Santa & Sons Christmas Trees located at the corner of Burbank Blvd and Fulton Avenue. "So when you buy a real Christmas tree for your family, you are providing living wage local jobs on family owned, environmentally sustainable small acreage farms in rural parts of our state."

Doug Hundley, a spokesman for the National Christmas Tree Association, recommends the public to shop between Nov. 25 and Dec. 1 to optimize selection and avoid last-minute price hikes.

While the price of a real tree may be high, the public is paying less overall because real trees can be harvested while fake trees do not decompose, producing more waste in our ecosystem.

CURTSEY OF SANTA AND SONS / PUBLIC DOMAIN

TREES- Customers line up to purchase their annual Christmas tree from Santa and Sons in Parking Lot G.

Note taking helps students

Studies show that note-taking makes the difference, but only if done correctly.

BY HARRISON MCQUINN
MANAGING EDITOR

"Note-taking allows people to outsource their memories to an external source (paper)," according to an entry by The American Journal of Psychology.

Listening to lectures is one way to retain information, but taking notes is the stronger cognitive mechanism. There are several ways to take notes from classic methods like Cornell and outlining to the new-age approach of typing on a laptop, but writing has proven to be more effective when using the right technique.

Valley Professor Kenneth Feldmeier stresses the importance of notes as, "...absolutely essential. If you ink, you think it."

Feldmeier also lectures at College of the Canyons, and despite teaching over four years, has only recently introduced note-taking assignments to his classes. He assigns material to read then take notes in a Cornell style with one column for what students read and the other for what they interpreted. He claims to see upward trending for his students' grades following this application of taking notes.

The Journal of Educational Psychology ran an experiment in which only one group takes notes. The students who took notes resoundingly scored higher on immediate and delayed-recall tests.

There is no strong argument against taking notes; however, some practices are statistically better.

According to the same study, the average student can write around .3 words per second whereas professors average a 2 to 3 spoken words per second.

With a ratio like that, time is of the essence. One way to keep up with the lectures is paraphrasing.

To paraphrase, one needs to improve their eye for detail, which will allow them to summarize information in their own words. If a term is presented and one simply copies the definition word-for-word, they are limiting their understanding.

Next time a professor cuts to a slide detailing socioecology in over 30 words, try summarizing as if explaining it to a friend at a stoplight. This method will save time and provide a clearer understanding of tough terms. Whether the technique is outlining, Cornell-style, mapping, or simple bullet points, paraphrasing is the secret to successful note-taking.

Students who take notes will ultimately be in a better place, especially when they get home and forgot what the professor discussed.

LEAVE SPACE IN THE MARGINS FOR ANYTHING YOU MAY HAVE MISSED
SHRINK IT DOWN TO THE SIMPLEST TERMS AND MAKE IT EASY TO REMEMBER
PEOPLE CAN TALK FASTER THAN YOU CAN WRITE, USE ABBREV. WHEN NEEDED
STUDY YOUR NOTES THE SAME DAY YOU WRITE THEM FOR BETTER RETENTION
LEAVE SPACE
BE BRIEF
ABBREVIATE
STUDY

ILLUSTRATION BY SOLOMON SMITH

ILLUSTRATION BY / PIXABAY

Coming winter months may spell depression for some

BY VICENTE VITELA
STAFF WRITER

Seasonal depression, coupled with the stress of finals, can hit students hard at the end of the year.

With the time change and drop in temperature, the winter time can mean a loss of motivation and a lack of self-confidence leading to seasonal depression. Seasonal depression is a mood disorder that can affect someone the same time each year starting around winter and ends around April or May.

This means that people with the disorder feel a decrease in energy and lack of sleep. This form of depression can make those effected more irritable and experience a lack of concentration.

Norman Rosenthal, a doctor who studied depression, said, "one of the main causes of the condition is a lack of sunlight"

Seasonal depression can also lead to insecurities and low self-esteem. College students dealing with this depression experience a more anti-social feeling leading to less outside contact.

The disorder affects about four to 6 percent of Americans during the winter time alone according to MentalHealthAmerica.com. People with this form of depression often feel more obligated to stay home and have less social interaction whether it be with friends or family.

This type of depression can be found more in females than in males. In fact, women are eight times more likely to deal with this type of depression than males are based off a study for light therapy with seasonal depression patients

Possible treatments for seasonal depression involve light therapy and two essential functions of life, exercise and sunlight.

FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN WRITING, DESIGNING, OR CONTRIBUTING TO THE VALLEY STAR VISIT US AT BJ-114.

For additional content, please visit:
www.thevalleystar.com

VALLEY LIFE

President carries Valley to new and better heights

Valley College President Erika Endrijonas is an approachable, friendly and talkative leader–not your run-of-the-mill president hiding behind closed doors.

PHOTO BY / SEBASTIAN MINO-BUCHELI

FOOTBALL EARRINGS- Endrijonas, shown here on her office balcony, sporting a pair of football earrings.

BY HARRISON MCQUINN
MANAGING EDITOR

Atop the new administration building overlooking the college is where you will find her, the president who saved Valley College from losing its accreditation.

President Erika Endrijonas has performed virtually every job at a college. She is a Jill of all trades who puts her nose to the grindstone, opening countless programs to propel students into the workplace.

"It's more student-focused than USC and CSUN because of the population we serve. We embrace that," said Endrijonas of Valley as it compares to her two alma maters.

Endrijonas did not only complete a bachelor's at CSUN, she also taught part-time and worked in Oviatt Library. She went on to serve as a dean and vice president at Santa Barbara City College and Oxnard College respectively. Endrijonas now holds positions in the Valley Industry and Commerce Association Board, Intelecom Board of Directors, and Valley Economic Alliance board.

"There's a ton of crossover," she admitted of her work history as it blends into her role at Valley.

Military brat is what Endrijonas referred to herself as during younger years in West Germany where she was born. Her father served in the Army, which might explain her affinity for history. The 2017 Pioneer Woman of the Year's favorite time periods to study were the nineteenth and twentieth century, both pivotal moments in women's history. She earned her bachelor's at CSUN as well as her master's and PhD at USC, all in history.

The Trojan alumni bleeds cardinal and gold to this day, engaging in a campus rivalry with faculty member Larry Nakamura who cheers on the Bruins. The two have an ongoing bet over the annual USC-UCLA grudge match on the gridiron, loser wears the other's colors for a day.

The president's football rivalry is a real illustration of her light-hearted attitude which she hopes more students will come to learn about her.

"I'm pretty approachable... I want to talk to [students]," Endrijonas commented about her monthly office hours she sometimes hold outside during club day.

She saved Valley when she took office in 2014, balanced the budget, facilitated the opening of several new programs, became a trailblazer for the LGBTQ community, and now her next milestone is set: winning the Bellwether Award which recognizes innovative programs that lead community colleges into the future.

Endrijonas stressed the importance of the award as it contributes to further goals of building capacity grants, "you have to show results." As she looks toward adding another accolade to her already established resume, Endrijonas continues to drive Valley College to new heights beyond her office.

PHOTO BY /SOLOMON SMITH

CLUBS- President Endrijonas participates in Cancer Awareness Day.

Punisher arrives to save the Netflix Marvel universe

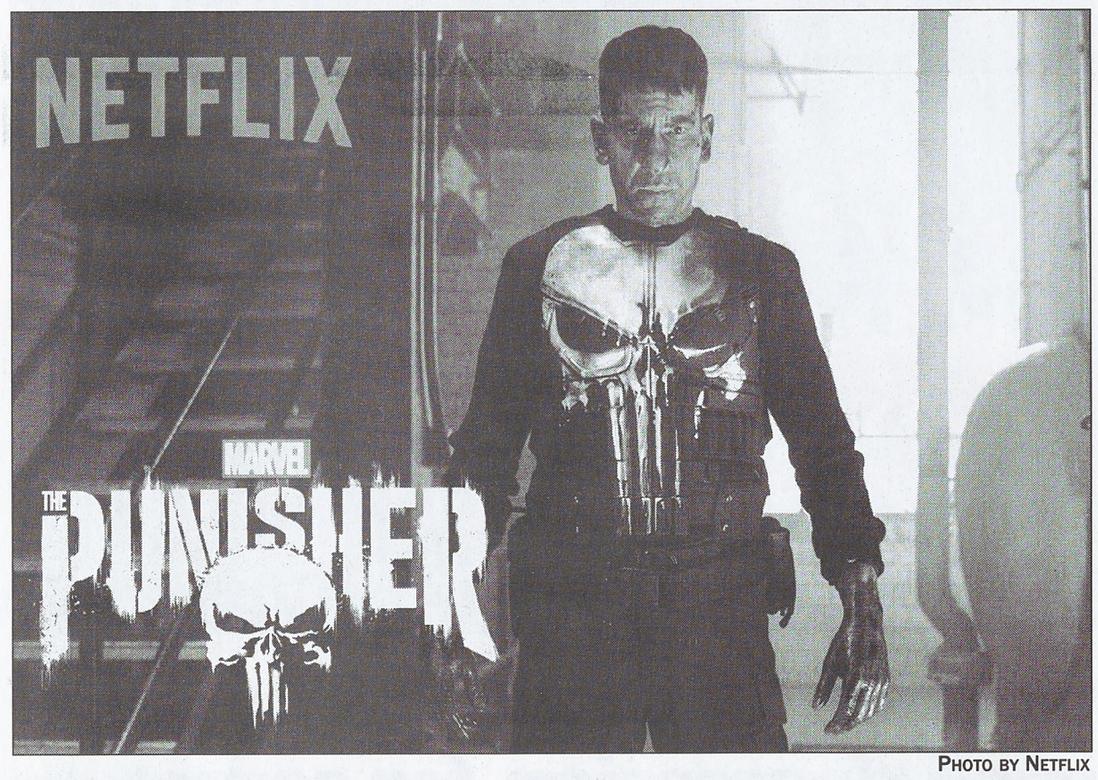


PHOTO BY NETFLIX

BLOODY- John Bernthal, as the title character, covered in blood and ready for the next violent confrontation .

Building on the popularity of some of their other Marvel franchises the Punisher brings Frank Castle to the forefront of his own bloody series.

BY SOLOMON SMITH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Punisher is a return to the excellent writing and great casting fans of the Netflix Marvel universe have come to expect and almost makes up for the unforgivable Iron Fist.

Before The Iron Fist, Netflix was on a roll with its comic book anti-heroes: Daredevil, Jessica Jones and Luke Cage. The streaming site stumbled with the terrible casting, writing and acting of Iron Fist, but with the recent release of the Punisher, Netflix has ripped off the skin on the anti-hero, and viewers will likely want more.

First introduced as a mysterious villain in the third season of Dare Devil, the Punisher has brought life back to the Netflix Marvel franchise, and best of all, hope to its viewers.

The series picks up six months after Frank Castle, the eponymous title character, has killed what he believes is the last man on the list of those responsible for the deaths of his family. Castle, a former U.S. Marine Corps Scout Sniper, trained in hand-to-hand combat and guerilla warfare is good at killing and takes to it.

The first few episodes establish the emptiness of a purposeful man. From this, viewers get to watch the dark evolution of an iconic anti-hero. The pacing of the series as a whole is quick. The writing moves it along at just the right speed, giving character development enough space for the people to matter while still allowing for the regularly scheduled gun fight.

Violence is not only a theme on the show, it is also a character. It is used as a storytelling device and has a reoccurring role in almost every episode. There is no fear of blood splatters or gunshot wounds and the stark way that it is shown heightens the tension. The Punisher is a dark ultra-violent world with characters who die in bloody ways that matter to the plot.

The show does have some problems, however. There is a subplot involving a young veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. The way it is represented on the show is uneven, and eventually devolves into a ham-fisted message about PTSD.

It takes this sensitive subject and shoehorns it in, making the young soldier a cliché and entirely misses its own point. That stumble aside, the Punisher moves forward with weight and is entertaining when it avoids being anything other than what it is.

Viewers will be glad they stayed up all night to watch it.

Pixar's "Coco" gets it just right

Pixar tackles another culture, this time with more research.

BY SEBASTIAN MINO-BUCHELI
STAFF WRITER

Behind the beautiful visuals, Coco tackles difficult subjects, such as death, the afterlife, family and Mexican culture through an recycled but, entertaining plot.

The story begins with Miguel Rivera, an aspiring 12-year-old musician voiced by Anthony Gonzalez. Rivera talks about his dreams of becoming an established musician like his idol Ernesto de la Cruz, but there is an ancestral ban on music within his family. Through a mysterious chain of events, Miguel and his dog accidentally enter the Land of the Dead while looking for the secrets of the Rivera family, where they come across a skeletal figure voiced by Mexican actor Gael Garcia Bernal.

"I've long been interested in Día de Los Muertos," said Lee Unkrich, Director of Toy Story 3 and Coco, "I immediately felt this weight on my shoulders, of the responsibility to get this story right and to be culturally accurate and respectful."

He did get it right. There's a sense of joy knowing that Pixar respected the Mexican traditions of Dia de Los Muertos, which shines through in the film.

The writers took a similar approach for "Moana," but only scratched the surface, which was criticized for not being respectful of the culture, and being inauthentic. For "Coco," the writers made sure to visit Mexico to avoid this problem.

Coco, writers made sure to visit Mexico to draw inspiration for both art and culture. Important details were included in the film adding to its authenticity, such as the of having photos of the deceased loved ones, personal objects, and food placed at the altar, all meant to provide comfort for ancestors who cross into the land of the living for a visit.

There were numerous advance screenings to ensure the film did not portray stereotypical characters. Writer Adrian Molina, who is Mexican-American, contributed heavily to the movie and was promoted to Co-Director halfway through production.

"Like the characters in the movie, my grandmother was wheelchair-bound, and both my grandparents spoke Spanish but not very much English," said Molina. " I love music, and the opportunity to create these characters, that I knew the world would fall in love with, was very exciting."

"Coco" opened top at the box office, which goes to show that Pixar has learned from their mistakes and gives more evidence to the notion that if people-of-color stories are told correctly, an audience will come.

PHOTO CURTESEY VIMEO

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS- Coco is a celebration of the rich Mexican-Amr.

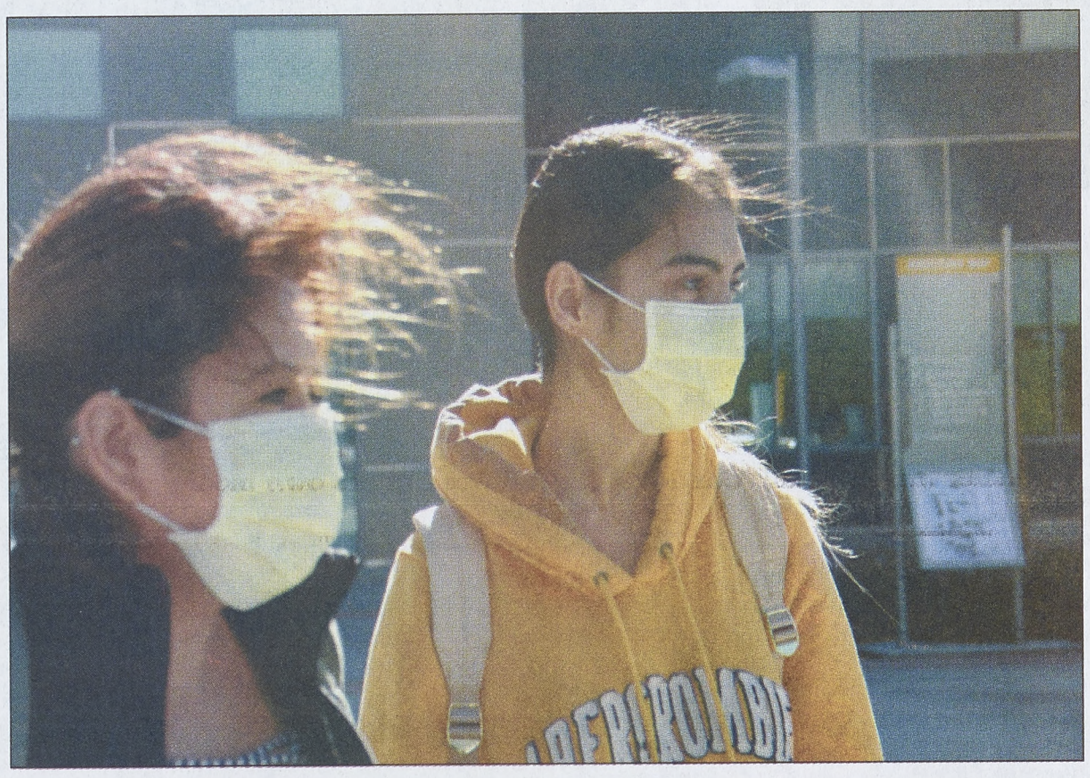
Wildfires rage across Southern California

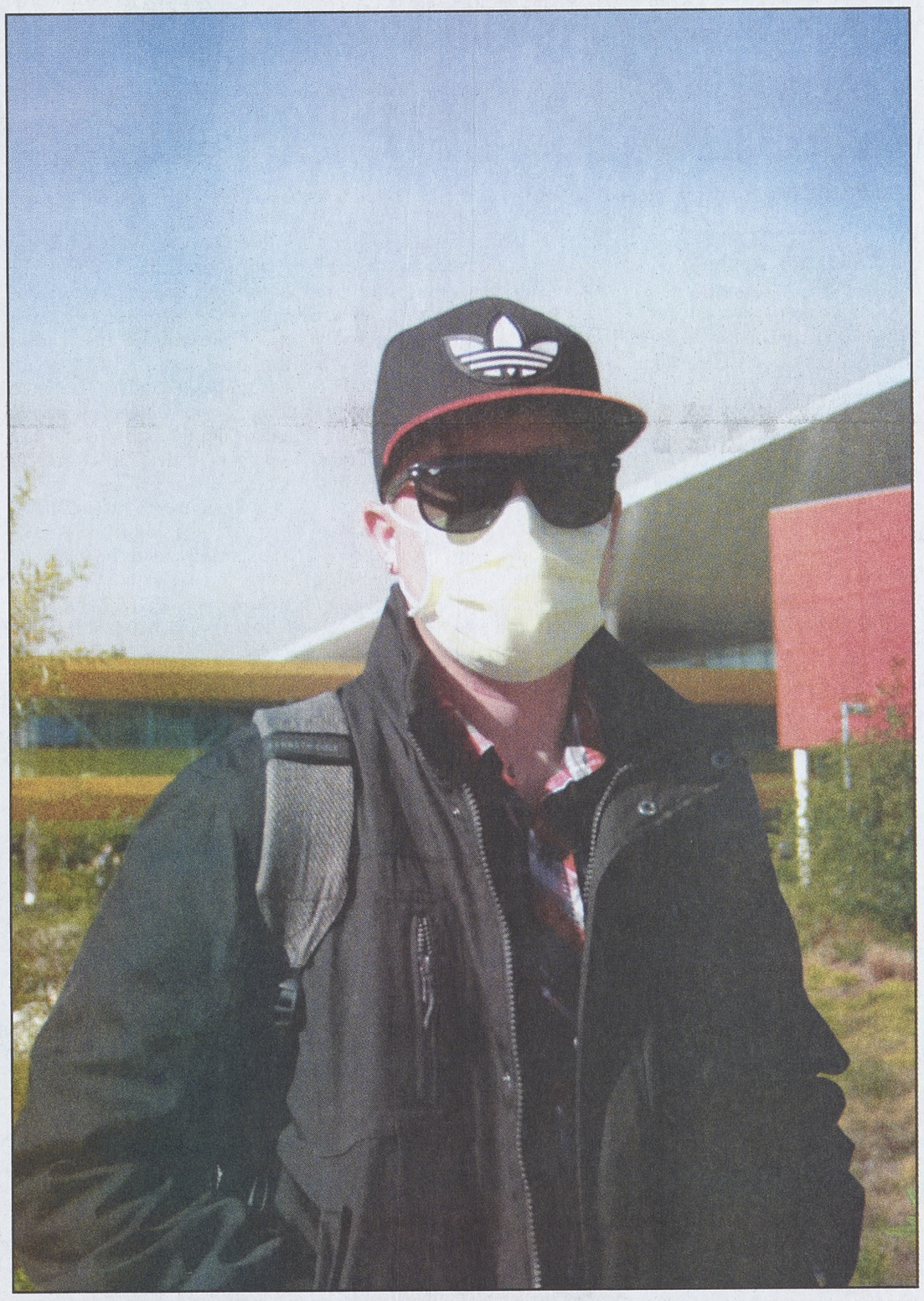
President Erika Edrijonas sent out an email alert Wednesday afternoon announcing that Valley College will be closed on Thursday.

It was the second time this week that the campus was closed. On Tuesday, the Health Center handed out surgical masks before students were sent home.

"Based on the current fires, high wind warnings and air quality warnings from the AQMD, Los Angeles Valley College will be closed Thursday, December 7. All Day and evening classes are canceled and all offices will be closed," the email read.

Photos by Sebastian Mino-Bucheli





SPORTS

Lady Monarch proves she can lead team on and off the court

Valley's Rebecca Islas is putting up numbers on the court and in her classes.

PHOTO BY/SEBASTIAN MINO-BUCHELI

PRACTICE-Rebecca Islas, number 22,a forward on the Lady Monarchs basketball team, lead the Western State Conference in scoring.

BY JAIRO ALVARADO
STAFF WRITER

Valley sophomore Rebecca Islas wastes no time dribbling her way through even the toughest defenders and is averaging double-doubles this season.

Despite minimal minutes as a freshman while first learning the pace of college ball, Islas averaged 10 points and 6 rebounds per game last year. The lady monarch is now leading the Western State Conference in scoring.

"I have grown into a better person and student athlete," said Islas at the beginning of the season. "Coach Hang has helped develop my game drastically."

The Boyle Heights native attended La Salle High School in Pasadena. It was during that time that Islas's raw talent first shined. As a Lancer she had been accepted to many universities; however, she decided to attend Valley College. Islas knew she still needed to work on her court skills and develop some confidence.

Growing up, Islas idolized fellow forward and UCLA star Kevin Love. She is also a fan of the Los Angeles Sparks and Lakers.

Not only is she leading the conference with 27.2 points per game, but Islas also looks unstoppable in the classroom as she prepares to transfer to a four-year university to pursue a degree in Sociology.

Deciding to attend Valley instead of a major university has turned out to be a pivotal move for Islas, as the junior college has really helped her develop as a student off the court. Islas ultimately continues to be a team leader for the newcomers of the young monarch squad, shattering expectations both physically and academically.

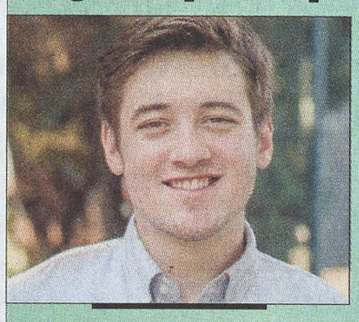
"I thank all my coaches, teammates, family and friends for making my experience at Los Angeles Valley College enjoyable," said Islas.

The star sophomore will lead the monarchs at home Dec. 8 through Dec. 10 as they host LAVC Buddy's All Star Classic in the South Gym.

MCQUINN'S PRESSBOX

Sports tickets are not selling

Fans have stopped attending as many sporting events and goes deeper than protests.



HARRISON MCQUINN
SPORTS EDITOR

It is an action-packed year for the NFL with new front-runners like Philadelphia and Los Angeles, but fans are not showing up to the games.

Professional football has experienced a trending decline in fan attendance, which many have attributed to protests; however, the NBA and MLB are facing similarly empty seats with no protests to blame.

There was only one player who has kneeled for protest in the MLB, yet the average attendance dropped around 201 people since last year according to Baseball-Reference.com. The same goes for the Staples Center which ESPN estimated to be 503 fans lighter per game this year. Sports have come a long way from the 1980 Super Bowl XIV which shattered attendance records, and protests are simply a scapegoat.

Ticket prices and officiating are real culprits behind the case of the missing fans.

For fans who can catch a game at their local bar or on streams for free, a mean price of $77, $89, and $172 for MLB, NBA, and NFL tickets respectively seems a bit steep. The NFL alone has increased it's average ticket prices over 6 percent this year according to Vivid Seats. In a word, prices have gone up while the quality of games has diminished.

Officiating has changed significantly on the gridiron, baseball field, and court. This thickening of the rule books means more penalties, review of plays, free throws, and less contact.

"Oh there's a swing by O'Neal," yelled Marv Albert during the 1999 brawl between Charles Barkley and Shaquille O'Neal.

Sports have since become less exciting. The iron fist of ejections and fines has come down on even the slightest offense, breeding a new era of players with the softness of Stephen Curry and Lebron James. The old excitement and physical energy is fading from these sports. Even the MLB's river of brawls runs dry, with the climax of 2017 being Bryce Harper's awkward helmet throw while charging Hunter Strickland.

Now that referees call every form of contact a foul, NBA games are reaching record highs of 160 minutes. Unfortunately for fans, refs cannot be called for delay of game.

The MLB hopes to reduce length of games by implementing stricter pitching clocks while runners are on base, but in the meantime, fans are skipping the costly seats to these penalty pastimes and catching them on the big screen.

Men's basketball in crisis mode

The Monarchs have four of their last five games and their bad luck continued last weekend.

PHOTO BY /PUBLIC DOMAIN

SMART DEFENSE-Men's basketball's lackluster performance for the last half of the season shows no signs of improvement.

HARRISON MCQUINN
SPORTS EDITOR

The Monarch men's basketball team is officially hitting the panic button after falling 1-3 over the weekend at the West LA Tournament.

Coach Virgil Watson returned for his 13 consecutive season with Valley. Last year, the team went 11-15 and were one of the few on the bubble who ended up missing playoffs. The Monarchs seem to be backtracking this season with a current record of 2-7.

The first matchup of the weekend tournament was Thursday against West LA College. Christian Morataya and DJ Walker combined for 26 points; however, Valley ultimately fell to the Wildcats 83-64. The Monarchs struggled on the outside, shooting only 24 percent from the field. West LA faced similar trouble on offense, but a total of 25 Monarch turnovers kept Valley trailing.

Friday night brought a well-earned victory for Monarchs in overtime against the Glendale Vaqueros. Valley outscored Glendale by four buckets after regulation with a total score of 92-88. Christian Hodge lead the team in scoring with 18 points, but forward Elijah Bonds saved the night on a three-point jumper with less than 30 seconds to spare.

Valley lost its third and final matchup against Pierce in the Consolation bracket. Although keeping their turnovers in the single digits, the Monarchs shot 18-52. The Brahmas (3-5) on the other hand, shot well from the outside, racking up 10 threes and a 59.3 field goal percentage.

The team continues to wrestle with turnovers and empty possessions. Their wide losses can be explained by the respective two areas. With only nine matchups left before the 2018 Western State Conference Games, the Monarchs will need to improve their offense significantly to turn around their below .300 start to the season.

Valley will face San Diego Miramar College on Thursday, Dec. 7, 2017 at the Santa Barbara City College tournament. Miramar (7-2) is currently second in the Pacific Coast-North division, and will be a tough opponent averaging more than 90 points per game.

Must See Games

This Winter

* Los Angeles home game

NHL

Kings vs Devils - Dec 12
4:00 PM on FSW

Kings vs Sharks - Dec 23
7:00 PM on FSW

NBA Basketball

Warriors Vs Cavaliers - Dec 25
12:00 PM on ABC

*Lakers Vs Clippers - Dec 29
7:30 PM on Spectrum

NCAA Basketball

* USC vs Washington - Dec 29
11:00 AM on CBS

Duke vs Florida State - Dec 30
7:30 PM on PACN

NFL

Patriots vs Steelers - Dec 17
1:25 PM on CBS

Rams vs Seahawks - Dec 17
1:05 PM on FOX